

Paying the price: Helping students cover the cost of GED testing

While free GED® testing is a many-splendored thing, it is a rare and fleeting occurrence. However, paying the GED® testing fee can be less of a burden – or even a non-issue – for students if your program develops partnerships and processes that help defray these costs. Below you will find ideas based on current Kentucky adult education programs' tried-and-true methods.

- **Create a scholarship fund.** The Daviess County adult education program offers enrolled students the opportunity to apply for one of two scholarships, each of which provides partial payment (\$30). One scholarship is funded by a civic-minded individual and is designed to help future GED® graduates who plan to attend postsecondary education. The other scholarship, established in memory of the son of an adult education instructor, is funded by individual contributions and is available for any future GED® graduate. Students must complete an application and write a letter of thanks to be considered for each scholarship. The Daviess County staff recycles aluminum and paper to help fund GED® tests as well.
- **Make it easy for donors.** The Logan County adult education has taken its test-funding efforts into the 21st century by signing up with www.razoo.com, a site that allows small, local non-profits to accept donations via debit or credit card. On its Razoo page, Logan County adult education has suggested giving levels associated with programmatic needs; the \$75 level allows someone to cover a student's GED® fees. In order to contribute, someone just clicks on a giving level (or types in their own) and chooses how often they want to give this amount. From there, they are taken to an online payment page like they would see on their favorite shopping sites. Logan County Staff members promote their local page, http://www.razoo.com/story/Logan-County-Adult-Education?referral_code=share, in their e-mail signatures and plan to market it heavily in January, when Razoo hosts Kentucky Gives Day.
- **Explore potential community partnerships.** Connect with local organizations that serve similar populations, have similar goals, and/or want to contribute to the community in some meaningful way. Local women's clubs help McCracken and Breathitt County students in need, while other Breathitt and Lee County students are assisted by Morehead State University's Commonwealth Educational Opportunity Center. In Hancock County, the elementary schools' family resource centers pay the first-time testing fee of any qualified individual who has a child in Head Start or elementary school. If you have students who receive K-TAP (Kentucky Temporary Assistance for Parents), please note that all K-TAP participants may receive GED® testing vouchers. (In addition, active K-TAP participants are eligible to receive a \$250 educational bonus upon earning a GED® certificate.) If you know that a student is a resident in public

housing or a local recovery facility (or something similar), have them check to see if their testing fee could be covered.

- **Develop business partnerships.** Locally owned businesses and franchises are often seeking ways to contribute to the community, and you have the perfect opportunity for them to make a life-changing difference in an individual's life. Business owners who provide funding for GED® testing fees are not just kind, they're smart, too: They are helping ensure the economic stability of individuals who are going to be their potential customers one day! In Taylor County, the local McDonald's donated 20% of all of one day's counter sales to help with local students' GED® testing fees. In Casey and Wayne counties, local banks give a check once a year to be used toward GED® testing fees. GED® graduates in McLean County have their testing fees covered by a local car dealership.

Often, garnering financial assistance for your students' GED® testing fees can be as simple as letting people know that someone needs help. However, it can sometimes be difficult to know where and how to begin. If you would like assistance crafting a message (including the development of materials) that would help you pursue partnerships or scholarship sponsorships, please contact Missy Brownson at missy.brownson@ky.gov or (502) 573-5114, ext. 123.

SIDEBAR: Using funds to pay for computerized testing

As you know, payment for the computerized GED® test must be made online at the time testing is scheduled. Any individual or agency wishing to provide financial assistance for a student's testing may do so by purchasing GED® Testing Service Vouchers and following these steps:

- 1) Go to www.pearsonvue.com/vouchers.
- 2) Click on "Order Forms and Pricing Lists."
- 3) Click on or scroll down to "G" and select "GED® Testing Service" as the client.
- 4) Scroll down to "Jurisdiction Purchase Process" and follow the directions listed there.

Pearson VUE accepts Visa, MasterCard, AMEX, check and money transfers as forms of payment for vouchers.